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ABSTRACT

This study surveyed undergraduates involved in micro-teaching in two settings to identify what they considered strengths and weaknesses and to ascertain degrees to which they believed these strengths and weaknesses existed. Students enrolled in 300-level methodology classes recorded strengths and weaknesses in their micro-teaching experience within a demonstration classroom and within classrooms in the school settings to improve teaching techniques. These strengths and weaknesses were then put into objective statements. Students statistically measured degrees to which these strengths and weaknesses were believed to exist and compared the data. Results indicated perceived strengths and weaknesses which, when measured, revealed emphases not readily apparent. The factors present in both settings were similar, but they differed significantly regarding emphases. Twelve statements were measured using a Likert-type scale. The fact that an evaluator/assessor does not need to be present in demonstration classrooms as opposed to teaching in schools ranked first in priority. The second ranked factor was that in demonstration classrooms, it is possible to observe students whom one will be teaching prior to the lesson to determine the various teaching styles needed. Comparison of the two teaching environments revealed heavily weighted strengths in favor of using demonstration classrooms to improve teaching techniques. Teaching in schools was viewed only as being a more realistic teaching experience. (SM)

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A COMPARISON BY EDUCATION MAJORS OF INSTRUCTION IN A DEMONSTRATION CLASSROOM TO TEACHING IN THE SCHOOLS

A Paper

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The literature describes the classroom as a center for a dynamic system of interactions, occurring in a multiplicity of possible combinations. While undergraduates majoring in education are primarily concerned with organizing subject matter, a conducive teaching-learning environment must first exist. Two basic types of settings have traditionally been utilized in teacher education as a transmission from classes in learning theory to practice instruction; the on-campus demonstration classroom and classrooms in the schools.

The purpose of this study was (1) to survey junior-senior level undergraduates involved in micro-teaching in two basic types of teaching settings to identify what they viewed as strengths and weaknesses, and (2) to ascertain degrees to which these strengths and weaknesses were believed to exist, and compare the findings.

During the 1998 Spring Semester and Summer Session, 74 juniors and seniors enrolled in 300-level methodology classes were requested to record strengths and weaknesses in their micro-teaching experience using a demonstration classroom and classrooms in the schools as settings to improve teaching techniques. These strengths and weaknesses were then put into objective statements. In the 1998 Fall Semester and 1999 Spring Semester, different classes consisting of 71 juniors and seniors statistically measured degrees to which these strengths and weaknesses were believed to exist, and compared the data.

Included in the findings were perceived strengths and weaknesses which, when measured, revealed emphases not readily apparent. The factors present in both settings, demonstration and in schools, were similar; but differed significantly with regard to emphases when compared. Twelve statements were measured using a Likert-type scale of five degrees by the 71 respondents.

The fact that an evaluator/assessor does not need to be present in a demonstration

classroom, as compared to teaching in the schools, ranked first in priority. The rationale: the teaching environment is less intimidating without the evaluator/assessor present, as in a regular in-school classroom. Ranking second in priority, in a demonstration classroom it is possible to observe the students whom you will be teaching prior to the lesson, to determine different teaching styles that will be needed.

"Transportation and arrangement of teaching materials are easier in a demonstration classroom" ranked third; and the feasibility of using a camcorder with micro-teaching in a demonstration setting ranked fourth. Fifth in the priority of strengths and weaknesses was the existence of an opportunity in a demonstration classroom to observe oneself and make improvements.

"Team teaching in pairs can be more easily planned and practiced in a demonstration classroom" placed sixth in the priority. Ranking seventh in pertinence was the statement that reflective teaching techniques can more readily be utilized in a demonstration classroom. Placing eighth was the fact that teaching in the schools is a more realistic experience than teaching in a demonstration classroom; ninth in priority revealed that the demonstration classroom provides a familiar environment which is conducive to learning and less threatening to the students teaching.

Also ranking ninth, "In a demonstration classroom, the student teacher(s) have an opportunity to practice their lesson before teaching the class. The fact that using a demonstration classroom allows other members of the class to view the lesson from an adjacent observation room ranked tenth. Last in priority was "The regular classroom teacher is not usually involved in handling behavioral problems in a demonstration classroom, but is present to provide attention for students with special needs".

In summary, the first group of respondents (74) in the study were requested to identify strengths and weaknesses in their micro-teaching experience in a demonstration classroom as compared to teaching in the schools. The second group of respondents (71) were requested to statistically measure degrees to which these strengths and weaknesses were believed to exist in order to make a comparison. This comparison of the two teaching environments revealed heavily weighed strengths in favor of using a demonstration classroom to improve teaching techniques. Teaching in the schools was viewed only as being a more realistic teaching experience.

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